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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/643,780	08/19/2003	Lloyd Randall Anderson	047982/268782	4113
826	7590	03/24/2004	EXAMINER	
ALSTON & BIRD LLP BANK OF AMERICA PLAZA 101 SOUTH TRYON STREET, SUITE 4000 CHARLOTTE, NC 28280-4000			CEGIELNIK, URSZULA M	
		ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER
		3712		

DATE MAILED: 03/24/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/643,780	ANDERSON, LLOYD RANDALL
	Examiner Urszula M Cegielnik	Art Unit 3712

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on _____.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-6 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-5 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) 6 is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All
 - b) Some *
 - c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ .	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ .

DETAILED ACTION

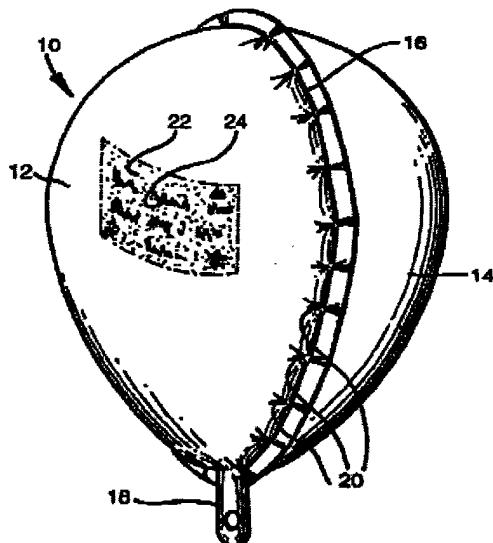
Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

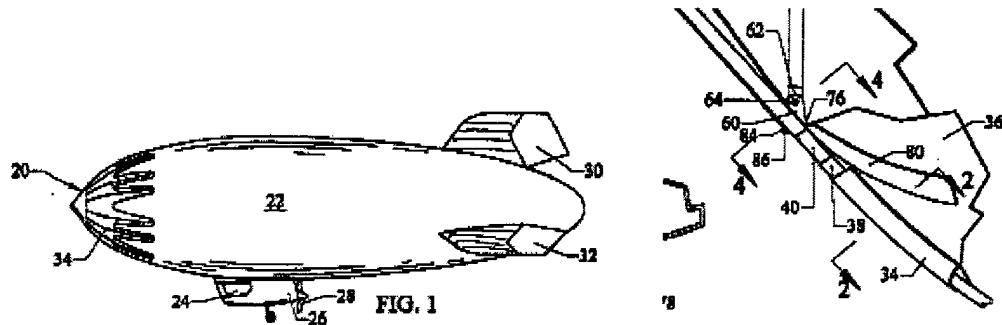
(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Lang.



Lang discloses an apparatus comprising a flexible material (10) having low permeability to a lighter than air gas, the flexible material (10) defining a chamber (the interior portion of reference numeral 10); at least one structured member (16) coupled to

the flexible material (10) such that when the chamber is filled with the gas to a known level, the apparatus is substantially neutrally buoyant under ambient conditions.



Claims 1-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Barnes,

III.

Barnes, III. discloses an apparatus comprising a flexible material (10) having low permeability to a lighter than air gas, the flexible material (10) defining a chamber (the interior portion of reference numeral 10); at least one structured member (38) coupled to the flexible material (10) such that when the chamber is filled with the gas to a known level, the apparatus is substantially neutrally buoyant under ambient conditions; a sleeve (34) coupled to the flexible material to retain the at least one structured member (38); the sleeve is heat welded to the flexible material, and the sleeve (34) and the flexible material are a same material. a plurality of flexible strips coupled to the flexible material to retain at least one structural member (38) adjacent to the flexible material.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 2-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lang in view of Barnes, III.

Lang discloses the claimed invention except for a sleeve coupled to the flexible material to retain the at least one structured member; the sleeve is heat welded to the flexible material, and the sleeve and the flexible material are a same material.

Barnes, III. discloses a sleeve coupled to a flexible material to retain at least one structural member, the sleeve and the flexible material are a same material.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill at the time the invention was made to provide a sleeve coupled to the flexible material as taught by Barnes, III, since such a modification would secure the structural member to the inflatable device.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claim 6 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Urszula M. Cegielnik whose telephone number is 703-

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306-5806. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday, from 5:30AM - 2:00PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Derris H. Banks can be reached on 703-308-1745. **The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306 for both regular and After Final communications.**

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to Customer Service at 703-306-5648.

Urszula M. Cegielnik
Assistant Examiner
Art Unit 3712



DERRIS H. BANKS
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3700